clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Mangrovers Along India's Coastline

1693. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the findings of the Space Research Organisation on the condition of India's coastline;

(b) whether Mangroves are considered essential to maintain coastline;

(e) whether there has been a serious depletion of mangroves from the different coastal areas of the country; and

(d) if so, what efforts are being made by Government to restore mangroves in these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) According to the Mangrove Atlas of India Published in August 1999 by Space Application Centre (Indian Space Research Organisation), Indian harbours some of the best mangrove swamps in the world. These are located in the deltas of rivers such as the Ganga, Mahanadi. Godavari and Krishna as well as the Andaman and Nicobar ground of islands and the Gulf of Kachchh. The total area covered by mangroves in India is estimated at about 4460 sq.km. Mangroves are essential to stabilize shore lines and the banks of rivers and estuaries providing them with some protection from tidal waves, ocean currents and storm surges. Mangroves are under pressure due to increasing population, development of aquaculture, salt pans and ports, location of waste effluent disposal sites and development of various industries along the coastline.

(d) Realising the ecological and economic significance of mangroves and threats faced by this ecosystem. Ministry of Environment and Forests,. launched a Scheme on Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs in 1986. On the recommendations of the National Committee, 15 mangrove areas in the country have been identified for intensive conservation and management. The scheme covers eco-resloration and afforestation, protection, ecodevelopmental activities and education and awareness related to mangroves. Financial assistance is extended to the concerned Slate Governments/Union Territories for implementation of Management Action Plans in identified mangrove areas. State level steering Committees have been constituted to oversee the progress of implementation of these Management Action Plans.